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VIA E-mail

**Re: Kindergarten Enrollment Date Change  
House Bill 4513-1/4514 (and Senate Bill 315/316)**

Dear Representatives -

I am writing to you as a concerned citizen and parent of a soon-to-be Kindergartner at Baldwin Elementary, in Rochester Hills, MI. Let me first say that I do not take a position on the merits of moving the Kindergarten cut-off. However, I am absolutely opposed to any legislation that would implement a change for this coming 2012-2013 school year. In other words, I am opposed to the timing aspect of this legislation.

My daughter, Isabel will turn five on October 25, 2007. She is currently (and has been for the past two years) in a wonderful preschool program at Premier Academy. A program we selected to prepare her for Kindergarten **this fall**. For many reasons, Isabel is prepared for Kindergarten at Baldwin this coming fall. She is beginning to read, has been writing her full name, her brother's name, Mom, Dad and other short words for months, and can count to nearly 100. I have no doubt that she is ready for and will excel in school. I also have no doubt that she will be harmed if she is not permitted to entered Kindergarten in the fall.

I have been actively following the recent developments related to proposed, revised Senate Bills 315 and 316 (I will refer to these bills collectively as "SB 315") and House Bill 4513-1 and 4514 (collectively "HB 4513") that, if passed, will directly impact a significant number of Michigan students for the **quickly approaching** 2012-2013 school year.

Under HB 4513-1, Isabel will turn five after the September 1 cut-off. Many of her classmates (who are absolutely ready to start) also will not be five in time. I understand that HB 4513-1 contains a waiver provision that would provide for a testing and evaluation procedure for children who would be five prior to December 1, 2012. However, that provision requires a request for waiver to be made by May 1, 2012. Given that this legislation is still pending, this is an unreasonable time frame for parents and school districts.

Under the newly proposed terms of SB 315(S), she will turn five years old just 6 days prior to the enrollment cut-off date and be eligible for Kindergarten this year. However, SB 315(S) appears to have eliminated the waiver provision.

With the state of this legislation in flux, it is unclear what date will ultimately be chosen and whether Isabel will be eligible for Kindergarten this year. I had been following the original proposed version of SB 315 and also understood that it had been effectively tabled for the time being. I was, as were many others, absolutely shocked to hear of the recent resurrection of these bills in their revised form, and even more shocked and appalled that, at such a late date and with so little notice, the legislature intends for these bills to be effective this 2012-2013 school year. As you of course must know, parents, students, the schools, and the school districts have been preparing for months, if not longer, for the 2012-2013 school year and it is, quite frankly, too late to implement such a change for this coming school year.

As I stated above, while I do not as a general matter have any issue with changing the Kindergarten cut-off date -- I absolutely object to the timing of this bill, which would make that cut-off effective IMMEDIATELY. This is especially troublesome given that school starts in five months and the cut-off for enrollment in most pre-school (and private kindergarten programs) has passed. What is to happen to these children? Further, even if these children can find a place in a pre-school, young five or private Kindergarten it is a huge unanticipated expense for many families. For example, it would cost me approximately \$5,000- \$10,000 to send my Isabel to a private Kindergarten program. In addition to the unplanned for expense, this raises a second problem --- what happens the next school year? Does she then move to Baldwin to repeat Kindergarten? I find that unacceptable. She would be immeasurably bored. Can she move into first grade? I also can't image placing her back in her current Pre-K program, which she has successfully completed? That is even assuming I would be able to secure a place for her there. Finally, there are not many young five programs out there and schools will not have time to develop them for this coming year.

I believe that many children will be stripped of certain invaluable opportunities and advantages that they will obtain from beginning Kindergarten with their peers this fall of 2012, and irreparably harmed by the inherently unfair "rock and hard place" situation in which many families are placed due to SB 315/HB 4513 being proposed and implemented at this specific time.

I strenuously urge you to oppose the implementation of SB 315/HB 4513 for at least the 2012-2013 school year and am hopeful that you will represent the interests of students, like my daughter, who are the future of this State and will be greatly, negatively impacted by such a short-sighted planning.

Thank you

*Nicole E. Wilenski*